

WATER ALLOCATION PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT WATER-USE REPORTING COMMITTEE MEETING

8/20/2003

9:30 AM

**University of Rhode Island, Narragansett Bay Campus
CACS 111**

Minutes

**Session Focus: Draft Report & Recommendations to be shared with the
WAPAC for discussion in the September 25 meeting.**

Attending: Anne Veeger, Henry Meyer, Liz Scott, Alisa Richardson, Jim Campbell, Emily Wild, Al Bettencourt, Harold Ward, Joe McLoughlin, Harriet Powell, Kathy Crawley

1) Input to Priority Uses and Education Committees

Members received a copy of *Interim Recommendations* provided by the Priority Uses Committee. Anne Veeger stated that she would initiate an email conversation with committee members and forward any comments.

For the Education Committee, members reviewed the matrix and input from Anne Veeger. They discussed and amended the matrix to eliminate #2 (Where do we lose water?) noting that the item is contained within #1 and to add a statement about increasing the flow of information and data about water use and availability to the general public and municipalities.

2) Coefficients for estimating water use (cont.)

- a) Compare estimated versus metered data: - agricultural users - Jim Campbell & Emily Wild (matrix distributed).

This agenda item continued the discussion and analysis by this committee of data needs and gaps. There was significant discussion about the water use coefficients for agriculture. There was consensus that the agricultural coefficients do not match up well with metered data for turf farming. The coefficients underestimate water use by turf farms. Also, there was recognition of the need to assess variability-crop rotation, number of acres in production, different agricultural uses, fallow acres, etc. Mr. Bettencourt felt that any estimate for agricultural water use should be based on no rain. The coefficients estimate water use less precipitation. There was also discussion about how to collect more accurate data moving forward with recognition that enough data is needed to establish reasonable numbers in any given year. Options include evaluation of the stream gage network and precipitation data points and consider metered withdrawal data.

3) Committee Findings & Recommendations

The committee made recommendations for the following categories based upon analysis of existing data, gaps and “error bars”, and needs: Public supply (major and

minor suppliers), Self supply (domestic, commercial, industrial, agricultural), State-wide vs. Basin:

1. Collect metered data to accurately reflect agricultural water use
2. Require “major” public suppliers (those required to submit WSSMPs) to report monthly water withdrawal data annually on a calendar year basis. The committee felt that this could be accomplished in the short term and that data is available now.
3. Require “major” public suppliers (those required to submit WSSMPs) to breakdown and report water use by category (domestic, commercial, industrial, institutional, “nonaccount”) quarterly, based on a calendar year (example, Q1 is January, February, March). There was recognition that this may take time to implement as systems update software/capacity for reporting.
4. Conduct research to develop a range of domestic coefficients for water use which reflect seasonal variability, domestic irrigation systems (sprinklers), lawn size, age (vegetation), to assist local land use decisions on water availability for future subdivisions. In general, the domestic coefficients are considered accurate and reliable. They do not reflect seasonal variability. Public water system studies and data as well as a “metered study” for self-supply with/without sprinklers, with varying lot sizes were offered as potential approaches to improving data and establishing a range of coefficients.
5. Require water use reporting over 20,000 gallons per day (for any three month period or on an average annual basis) for all self supplied users as well as “minor” suppliers statewide. It is important to note that this is a preliminary recommendation. The committee is still working on the language to capture the “right” threshold on a seasonal and annual basis. The committee is advocating a hydrologically based threshold and will provide justification/analysis for the threshold, in addition to thresholds adopted by other states. The committee is also reviewing water use in all categories from the Pawcatuck and Blackstone studies to assess the number of users that will be affected, percentage of use captured in the subbasins, as well as the applicability of the threshold in RI. This recommendation was brought to a motion with eight in favor and one opposed as follows:

Motion by Liz Scott, second by Henry Meyer to require reporting by self-supplied users and minor systems withdrawing over 20,000 gpd annually (on a calendar year basis) or during any three-month period, subject to analysis to assess the percentage of users captured by subbasin. The motion carried with Anne Veeger, Henry Meyer, Liz Scott, Alisa Richardson, Jim Campbell, Emily Wild, Harold Ward, Jo McLoughlin, and Harriet Powell in favor and Al Bettencourt opposed.

4) Implementation/Management Considerations

Time did not allow full discussion of the implementation and management considerations. However, there was limited discussion about the need to assess how much data will be collected and the costs of managing the process. There was consensus that the effort should be statewide and that the threshold should be uniform statewide rather than basin specific. Data would be available for use by basin and

subbasin. There was also preliminary discussion about a phased approach by basin and mandatory versus voluntary reporting. **Al Bettencourt made and withdrew a motion to recommend that any reporting be voluntary rather than mandatory.** The committee will continue this discussion. It was felt by a majority that a decision on whether reporting should be mandatory or voluntary was premature.

5) Draft outline elements

Members agreed to send elements to Anne Veeger so that she can continue to assemble the first draft of the report for review.

6) Tasks for September meeting- Review and refine draft report and recommendations

7) Schedule next meeting- The next meeting was scheduled for September 17, 10:00 at RIDEM (probably room 280 if available-room will be noted on agenda).

8) Adjournment- Meeting adjourned at 12:15 pm.